The Government have decided to set up a permanent Bench of the Guwahati High Court at Shillong, consisting of 2 Judges.

(b) As per information available, the number of main cases pending in the Guwahati High Court pertaining to Meghalay ais given below:

Pendency at the end of	Number of main cases
1983	294
1984	297
1985	Not available
1986	283

604. [*Transferred to the 20th November, 1987*]

605. [*Transferred to the 20th November,* 1987]

Abolition of Freight Equalisation Scheme

606. SHRI MOSTAFA BIN QUASEM: Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state:

(a) what is the progress made for abolition of freight equalisation scheme on coal etc. for which the Government is committed; and

(b) what are the reasons for the delay in abolition of the scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) and (b) There is no freight equalisation scheme operating in respect of coal. The Government has decided in principle to phase out gradually the existing freight equalisation in respect of cement & steel, subject to subsidisation of transport for remote, inaccessible and isolated areas. In the case of cement, phasing out of freight equalisation has already commenced with the introduction of partial decontrol with effect from 28-2-1982 Freight equalisation operates only in respect of the levy portion of the sale of cement which is progressively being reduced. As regards steel, in view of the representations received from various quarters it has been decided to refer the matter to the National Development Council.

Freight Equalisation Scheme

607. DR. R. K. PODDAR: Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state:

(a whether it is a fact that the Government is reluctant to phase out freight equalisation scheme in respect of iron and steel in view of vast price differential to save States like Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, which do not have steel Plants; and

(b) if so, whether on the same reasons the scheme for cotton, groundnut oils, industrial alcohol, mustard oil, wheat, textiles will be introduced to save the interests of States like Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Orissa, Bihar?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) It is incorrect to say that Government is reluctant to phase out freight equalisation scheme. The matter has been referred to National Development Council.

(b) No, Sir. As recommended by the National Transport Policy Committee it has been decided that no new scheme of freight equalisation for industrial commodities or for essential items of mass consumption